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SUBJECT: JUNE 17 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: EAST CHINA SEA, DIAOYU ISLANDS,
XI JINPING IN DPRK, SED

[1](#)1. Key points at the June 17 MFA press briefing were:

-- China and Japan are currently discussing the details of an agreement on East China Sea gas exploration.

-- The Diaoyu Islands are an inseparable part of China and Japan's actions there are "illegitimate."

-- Vice President Xi Jinping will visit North Korea from June 17-19 to and hopes to promote bilateral cooperation and friendship.

-- China is ready to listen to the concerns of the United States at the SED.

East China Sea

[1](#)2. At the June 17, 2008 regular MFA press briefing, MFA Spokesman Jiang Yu was asked repeatedly about a reported deal between China and Japan on oil exploration in the East China Sea. Jiang said information will be released once a deal is reached. Any agreement will be in accordance with the Fukuda-Hu consensus that the East China Sea be a "sea of peace, friendship and cooperation." Jiang stressed that China's policy toward the East China Sea has not changed. Jiang said that the Chunxiao oil and gas fields and their development as a part of China's territory is a separate issue from that of territorial demarcation. Asked to clarify whether that meant that joint development of the area and sovereignty of the area are two separate issues, Jiang backed down saying only that the two countries are having discussions on the details which will be released at the appropriate time.

[1](#)3. Regarding the Diaoyu Islands and the recent collision between a Japanese Coast Guard vessel and a Taiwan fishing vessel, Jiang stressed that the Diaoyu Islands are the indisputable territory of China and expressed China's "grave concern" over the incident. Jiang called on Japan to stop its "illegitimate" activities and to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Xi Jinping DPRK Visit

[1](#)4. The spokesperson confirmed that Vice President Xi Jinping will visit the DPRK from June 17-19. Jiang said that both countries are committed to the development of their traditional friendship. China hopes the visit will promote cooperation in various fields and good neighborly relations.

Strategic Economic Dialogue

[1](#)5. Asked about the Strategic Economic Dialogue, Jiang said that the two sides have been working on a 10 year cooperative framework document. China hopes the talks "have good results." Jiang reiterated China's position that the U.S. trade deficit is not caused by China's currency. China hopes that the United States will take effective measures to control the trade deficit. China is

"seriously considering the concerns of the U.S. side and is ready to make joint efforts with the United States to promote mutually beneficial trade between the two countries."

ASEM Meetings in Beijing

¶16. Jiang said that the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP) will take place on June 18. The declaration adopted during this meeting will be brought to the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) summit to be held in Beijing in October. China hopes that cooperation with Europe will result in a "win-win" situation.

Australian Athletes Missing Opening Ceremony

¶17. Asked to comment on reports that Australian athletes will not attend the opening ceremony for the Beijing Olympics due to pollution concerns, Jiang said that these concerns were not necessary. China will stick to its commitments and "make efforts to overcome the earthquake" in preparation for the Olympic Games, said Jiang. Jiang noted that Beijing has already taken more than 200 measures to improve the environment for the Olympic Games including strengthening cooperation with neighboring provinces to reduce pollution. During the games, the "main criteria" will be met and Beijing will provide a beautiful and clean environment.

Other

¶18. Jiang said that relevant authorities would handle preparation for a Saudi Arabia Oil Summit. When pressed, she would not reveal who

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the relevant authorities were. Jiang referred a question on whether foreign journalists would be allowed into Tibet to cover the Olympic torch to relevant authorities. Jiang had not heard reports that a Chinese dissident committed suicide after returning from Australia.

Visits

¶19. Greek president Karolos Papoulias will visit China from June 23-27. Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi will visit Kazakhstan from June 24-25.

PICCUTA